



PSC NEWS

Missouri Public Service Commission

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PSC STAFF CONTINUES FORMAL INVESTIGATION INTO ICE STORM RESTORATION EFFORTS

Jefferson City (February 25, 2002)---The Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission has sent official requests for detailed information to those electric companies in western Missouri that had customers lose power due to an ice storm.

“As we would with any event of this nature,” stated Warren Wood, Energy Department Manager, “we will be taking a detailed look at the service restoration efforts of those companies that are under Public Service Commission jurisdiction. We want to ensure that the affected electric companies did all that they could to restore service to their customers as quickly as possible.”

Wood says the Staff will look at a number of different items as part of its investigation. “Certainly, we want to carefully review their restoration plans. Were those plans activated quickly, were they followed and do those plans need to be changed in any way.” In addition, the PSC Staff will be reviewing information regarding when additional workmen were called to assist in the restoration effort; how many outside crews were called; and when they arrived. “We will evaluate whether all affected utility companies acted as quickly as possible to restore service to their customers given perhaps the worst ice storm ever in the Kansas City area,” stated Wood.

The Staff investigation will also seek a summary from the affected companies on the damaged equipment replaced (such as number of poles, fuses, cross arms, service wires down, and meter bases requiring repairs). Companies are also being asked to provide a summary of the media used to communicate with the public and other state and local agencies such as SEMA and how that communication was organized and executed. “Hundreds of thousands of customers were without power,” stated Wood. “We are interested in determining if those customers were given adequate information about power restoration efforts.”

Another important area the PSC Staff wants to thoroughly review is the activity of company call centers where customers reported outages. “We will be reviewing the number of incoming lines available for customers to use, the number of calls taken, the time required by the company to answer incoming calls, the number of abandoned calls and the time a customer was on hold before

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talking to a representative,” stated Wood. “A number of recommendations were made after the 1996 storm as they related to call center activity. This ice storm is the first real event which has tested those recommendations and call center improvements. We are very interested in seeing how those recommendations worked,” Wood said.

As part of the PSC Staff’s investigation, they will evaluate the tree-trimming budgets and programs of affected electric companies. “We will be reviewing the tree-trimming budget for the current year as well as tree trimming expenditures for the last four years as part of our investigation,” stated Wood.

The Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission has asked the companies to provide detailed information by March 15, 2002. “We will thoroughly review all information received during this investigation and provide a report, with recommendations if needed, to the Commission within 60 to 90 days of receiving the information,” stated Wood.